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Letter, 1972 August 17, from Jester J. Hairston to Eva Jessye

Jester J. Hairston

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Aug. 17, 1972

My Dearest:

Thank you so much for your letter containing the precious notices of your program in Washington. I am so proud to know you and to tell people that I preposed marriage to you and was gently, but firmly rejected. Even that makes me feel quite important, Miss Jessye. I love you now and always will. We have so very much in common. Please forgive me for not writing you much sooner. I have been on the run as usual all summer. When the public schools closed my college, summer clinics for teachers began. Now I have a little vacation till Labor Day. Then I go to S. C. where I conduct the choir of 70 high school kids (60% white, 40 black) for the governor of S. C. and 18 of the deep south governors and their wives. It will be held in Hilton Head, just outside of Charleston.

Your description of your nightmare with Freddie was the most dramatic bit of theatre I've read in years, Miss Jessye. And I believe every bit of it, knowing the said party. But I'm so happy for you that the play came out so very well and that the audience liked your work. You are like I am; God gave us both tremendous talent, we both use it to glorify Him here on earth and He sees to it that nothing we do in His name is ever anything but a tremendous Hit. Congratulations! I am so grateful to Michigan U. also, that they came to your rescur and sent the people down to help you.

Marge and I are so happy you have finally found a nice little place to live; a place where you can have it all to yourself. Your description of it was so graphic that we could see you sitting out on your little porch, listening to a concert of the slaves from the quarters as they sang by the moonlight.

This has been the most interesting of all my seasons, I think. It has been because I have been to so many controversial places, socially. I have been invited to come back to Salt Lake City, Utah, next season, this time to conduct 750 Mormon high school kids. I was invited to S. C. last March, to conduct a choir of 1500 Southern Baptist white high school kids, for their convention. I conducted a choir of 4,700 high school kids in an all-day clinic at Stillwater Okla. last winter. And just last week, I conducted a clinic of professional choral conductors, 200 of them, at Fullerton State College. It was a reading session of my songs. Sure wish you could have been there, Darling. I did one like that last winter, in Minneapolis, for 300 music teachers. One really has to know what he's talking about before he goes before a group of people like that.

I used your Simon the Fisherman at my session of teachers in New Mexico, two weeks ago. the professor wrote for 100 copies of it, but they told him it was out of print. Hurry and write another one like that, because it is priceless and now is the time to sell it. I'll write more later. Give my regard to Bob Schnitzer when you see him. Love from Marge also.

Dearest